

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6461

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14195

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH

SUBJECT: SENATOR GOLDWATER'S REMARKS

REF: A. STATE 176964; B. BANGKOK 13781; C. BANGKOK 14033
D. STATE 179878

1. SUMMARY: THE ENGLISH AND THAI LANGUAGE PRESS REACTION TO SENATOR GOLDWATER'S REPORTED STATEMENT ON THE U.S. BOMBING OF THAILAND HAS CONTINUED AT A HIGH LEVEL SINCE SEPTEMBER 4. IN COMMENTING ON THE GOLDWATER STATEMENT, THE THAI PRESS HAS MADE OTHER CRITICAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE U.S. PRESENCE IN THAILAND. THE EMBASSY STILL HAS NOT RECEIVED EITHER THE UPI REPORT ON THE GOLDWATER STATEMENT OR A CLARIFICATION FROM THE SENATOR'S OFFICE, BUT WE WELCOME WORD (REF D) THAT WE WILL RECEIVE CLARIFICATION SEPTEMBER 12. END SUMMARY.

2. SENATOR GOLDWATER'S STATEMENT ON THE U.S. BOMBING OF THAILAND CONTINUES TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION IN THE ENGLISH AND THAI LANGUAGE PRESS. THE REPORTED STATEMENT THAT THE US WOULD BOMB THAILAND HAS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY CONJURED UP THE IMAGE OF THAILAND LAID
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WASTE BY AMERICAN BOMBERS. A FEW COLUMNS, LIKE

THE SEPTEMBER 6 EDITORIAL IN "HAI DAILY", CONCLUDE THAT "SO LONG AS PRESIDENT NIXON HAS NOT ISSUED AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT LIKE THE COMMENT BY BARRY GOLDWATER, IT MEANS THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY TO TAKE SUCH ACTION. GOLDWATER'S STATEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT". MOST COLUMNISTS AND EDITORIALISTS, HOWEVER, HAVE STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE SENATOR. A COLUMN THAT APPEARED IN THE THAI-LANGUAGE "DAILY NDWS" COMMENTED, "WE HAVE COINED A NICKNAME FOR GOLDWATER. LET ANYONE TRANSLATE IT AND TELL HIM IN AMERICAN. WE ARE NOT AFRAID. WE ARE NOT AMERICAN SLAVES. LET THE WORDS "SON-OF-A-BITCH-BOMBER" BE ADDED TO GOLDWATER'S NAME". SOME COLUMNISTS "WELCOMED" THE SPEECH AS AN ILLUSTRATION THAT AMERICAN, NOT THAI INTERESTS, ARE WHAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. COLUMNISTS SUMALEE VIRAVADYA IN THE SEPTEMBER 9 "BANGKOK POST" WROTE THAT THE SENATOR'S SPEECH WAS A GOOD THING SINCE IT CLEARLY SHOWED THE THAI PEOPLE THAT "THE U.S. INTENDS TO PROTECT HER OWN INTERESTS FIRST, EVEN AT THE COST OF HURTING THAILAND".

3. THE BAD PRESS THAT WE ARE GETTING OUT OF THIS WHOLE INCIDENT HAS SPREAD TO OTHER AREAS OF CRITICISM. SUTHICHA YOUN IN THE PRESTIGIOUS "SIAM RATH" WROTE: "MR. WILLIAM KINTNER, WHO PRESIDENT NIXON HAS SELECTED TO BE THE NEW AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND, IS A GREAT FAN OF GOLDWATER AND HE MIGHT HAVE, THEREFORE, SIMILAR VIEWS TO THOSE OF GOLDWATER. THIS CAUSES VERY GRAVE CONCERN". THE EFFICACY OF THE U.S. PRESENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS ALSO COME UNDER ATTACK. SOUTHERN VATHI WROTE IN A "THAI RATH" COLUMN: "EVEN SHOULD THE U.S. WISH TO USE BOMBS TO HELP IN SUPPRESSION WORK, IT MIGHT MEET WITH FAILURE SIMILAR TO THAT MET IN LAOS, IN CAMBODIA, IN VIETNAM." AN ALMOST UNIVERSAL CRITICISM LEVELED AT THE RTG IN THE COLUMNS IS THAT IT IS NOT EFFECTIVELY PROTECTING THAI NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY.

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4. SOME QUARTERS IN THE PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT FEEL THAT THE USG HAS "USED" THAILAND AND NOW WE ARE "PULLING OUT", LEAVING THE RTG TO FACE THE MUSIC. THE RECENT HUE

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AND CRY IN THE PRSS OVER THE GOLDWATER STATEMENT HAS NOT ASSISTED US IN REASSURING THE THAI. IT IS UNFORTUNATE INDEED THAT WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO COUNTER IN TOTAL THE IMPRESSION CREATED BY PRESS REPORTS OF THE SENATOR'S REMARKS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE TRANSMIT THE CLARIFICATION PROMISED IN REFERENCE D SOONEST.

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